

## Covert Finiteness in Sundanese

The topic of finiteness is rarely broached in the closely related Indonesian-type languages. Despite there being a relatively robust literature describing tense, aspect, and mood in Indonesian languages (Adelaar 2013; Arka 2013; Austin 2013; Grangé 2006, 2013; Purwo 1989; Yanti 2013; and others), few have attempted to relate such marking to finiteness. The reasons for this are fairly obvious: tense and, for the most part, agreement are not overtly marked on verbs, and nominals take no overt case-marking. Thus, as is well known, the Sundanese sentences such as those in (1), for example, can refer to past, present, or future time, depending on the discourse context in which they are uttered. Additionally, there is no overt case marking: *Ujang* occurs in exactly the same form when it is the subject (1a) as it does when it is the object (1b). The same is true of *kuring* ‘I’, the object in (1a) and subject in (1b). The verb shows no agreement with the subject, occurring as *neunggeul* ‘hit’ regardless of whether the subject is 3rd person or 1st person. In the absence of any overt tense, agreement, or case, the question of finiteness seems to lack much relevance. Although the concept of finiteness was originally associated with person and number marking on verbs, much modern linguistics has taken both tense and agreement to be hallmarks of a finiteness distinction in language. However, we argue here that there is finiteness in Sundanese—covert finiteness—the effects of which are manifested in the licensing of subject in the language.

First, we show that finiteness cannot be identified with temporal auxiliaries or modals, as has been argued for Indonesian by Arka (2000, 2013). As sentences like (2) show, the future auxiliary is not incompatible with a control structure, as Arka reports for Indonesian. Then we show that the limited plural agreement (3) and third person agreement (4) cannot be taken as an overt manifestation of finiteness.

Despite having no overt manifestation of finiteness, we find that the distribution of overt subjects in Sundanese mirrors that in languages in which tense, agreement, and/or case can identify a clause as finite. We conclude that Sundanese, like Chinese, Lao, and other languages, does have a finiteness and that the finiteness is manifested in the grammatical structure as a covert feature on clauses.

## Data

- (1) a. Ujang neunggeul kuring.  
Ujang AV.hit 1SG  
'Ujang hit/hits/will hit me.'
- b. Kuring neunggeul Ujang.  
1SG AV.hit Ujang  
'I hit/will hit Ujang.'
- (2) Ujang ng-usaha-keun [(*rék*) indit ka dayeuh].  
Ujang AV-attempt-APPL FUT go to town  
'Ujang attempted to go to town.'
- (3) Barudak boga rencana [*rék ar*-indit ka Bali].  
children have plan FUT PL-go to Bali  
'The kids planned to go to Bali.'
- (4) Ujang di-anggap [geus nyaho-**eun** ka-jadi-an kamari].  
Ujang PV-assume PRF AV.know-3 NMLZ-become-NMLZ yesterday  
'Ujang was assumed to have known about yesterday's incident.'

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